

A VOICE FROM AMERICA ;

OR,

FOUR SERMONS

PREACHED IN ENGLAND

BY

THE REV. J. CAUGHEY,

THE GREAT AMERICAN REVIVALIST.

On the following subjects :

THE STRIVINGS OF THE
SPIRIT,
THE STANDING DOUBT,

THE STING OF DEATH,
THE OMNIPOTENCE OF
FAITH.

Reported by a Manchester Minister.

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REPRINTED BY
H. CHUBB & CO., PRINCE WM. STREET,
SAINT JOHN, N. B.

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PREFACE.

A Comet! a Comet! It seems to have no prescribed sphere. It crosses the vast Atlantic; it moves over many parts of Old England—old England, where many a star has burned, blazed, shone, and set “in brighter day to rise.” Old England, where yet, however, are to be found many spots of dark, dark night,—spots where spiritual death still slumbers undisturbed. But the comet commences its zig-zag—its erratic course. See! light gleams from it; lightnings strokes flash out; sounds—awful sounds roll forth. Listen! What do you hear? Sighs, sighs, loud moans, cries for mercy,—piercing walls rise and swell on the breeze. Listen again!—What do you hear? A song of joy,—My sins are pardoned, I am free! Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Voices in thousands mingle; they sound like many waters; the song awakens, rises, spreads, rolls around our isle, and ascends up in a chorus to heaven,—“Hallelujah to Him that sitteth upon the throne and to the Lamb for ever and ever.” The comet moves on,—See! see! It leaves a tract of brilliant light to mark its course. In the tract are seen a multitude of happy people; pardoned spirits; purified hearts; holy families; augmented churches. The comet is gone, but it has left thousands of streaming, gladdened eyes upturned toward heaven, gazing on the Lamb in the midst of the throne.

The editor of this little messenger felt a deep impression prompting him to preserve a few of the holy thoughts and burning words of the distinguished man; and, with earnest prayer, he sends forth this little voice to go echoing over our land, hoping that, as hundreds if not thousands, under these sermons, were saved in one place or another, as they came burning from the heart that conceived them, that they will still be instrumental of leading many a poor wanderer home to God. He also adds, that when he lost a sentence or so, he has ventured to add a few thoughts to make the sense complete; and, in one or two instances, he has taken the liberty of introducing an anecdote given by the preacher on other occasions. He however, believes, that those who heard these sermons, will see in them a pretty faithful portrait of their author.

The editor hopes that many precious souls, who are the fruits of Mr. Caughey's labours, will keep this little messenger as a talisman, so that should the great *Lion of Hell* place around them his snare, or should trial thicken on their path to induce them to faint on the heavenly road; or should the syren voice of pleasure sing in their ears to allure them from Jesus, that they will look at this little *Messenger*, hear this little voice, and make haste again, and delay not, to keep the commandments of God.

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I.—
II.—
SPIRIT

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THE STRIVING OF THE SPIRIT.

"And the Lord said, My Spirit shall not always strive with man."—Gen. vi. 3.

THIS is a declaration of God concerning the Antediluvian world. He was about to destroy them; but could not let fall one drop of water—one flash of lightning—one spark of fire,—He could neither drown nor damn a man of them till the Spirit had done striving with them. For the long space of an hundred and twenty years,—the period during which the ark was preparing,—the Holy Ghost strove with them; and when the ark was ready, God went round it, and shut every window, and every door, and he shut in Noah and his family. The sound of those closing doors, as it echoed among the hills, announced mercy fled and wrath begun,—the door was shut. Then the fury of God broke forth; and rush met rush, and flood met flood, and cataract met cataract, and tempest met tempest, till the last sinner cursed God and went down. The storm raged on still; in fury—in awful sublimity—it broke forth in one wild scene of boundless grandeur. And the Lord said, My Spirit shall not always strive with man.

I wish here to observe, that I selected a text for this occasion,—a text on which I could say things with greater liberty, but, about eleven o'clock this forenoon, it left me, it went entirely away, and another came. Well, thought I, perhaps God has sent me this text to humble me. Well, I again thought, I care not; I am willing to be humbled; I am willing to be anything or nothing, if souls are only saved. But—but I received with the text a message from God to some particular characters in this congregation. Oh, my soul is very happy! Bless God, I feel he is with me! I feel on my heart I have a message from God to you. Come, Holy Ghost, and apply thy word. And the Lord said, My Spirit shall not always strive with man.

In my text we have two points,—

I.—A GREAT FACT STATED—THE STRIVING OF THE SPIRIT.

II.—A DREADFUL EVENT PREDICTED—THE CESSATION OF THE SPIRIT'S STRIVING.

First, a great fact stated. There is about this fact two things, a Necessity, and a Certainty.

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First, a Necessity. What do you mean, says one, by a Necessity? I mean, firstly, there will be no concern about the soul's salvation without the strivings of the Spirit. Without the Spirit man is in darkness—in total darkness. He is darkness itself; there is not a glimmer in his soul. He is in death's shadow; and when a man is in the shadow, the substance is not far off. He is as dark as a Hottentot; yea, he is as dark as a devil.

It is by the Spirit he is convinced—alarmed. It is by the Spirit the memory is refreshed, the conscience aroused. Yea, that unbidden tear, telling that all is not yet lost; that softening tendency, that melting down into contrition, those throes of agony in the soul—all, all are the work of the Spirit. It is by the Spirit he is enabled to look to the Lamb of God that taketh away the sins of the world. Without the Spirit no conviction of sin, no contrition for the past, no softening tendency, no melting view of cavalry, no concern for the soul, will ever be felt. These influences may be resisted, and this resistence may be carried on to a point in the history, until conscience lays down its functions. Then the heart is as hard as a stone, and the understanding as dark as hell can make it. Then the sinner is like a ship half foundered, in midnight darkness on a stormy sea—masts gone, helm broken, with compass lost, left to the mercy of the winds and waves. Then, though he may drop a tear over the grave of some loved one, he will turn up towards the God that redeemed him the brazen front of sullen rebellion; the iron hardness will be on his soul, but an infidel he cannot become till the Spirit has given him up,—genuine infidelity can never take place till the Spirit has ceased to strive. See him, on and on, and on he rushes: the space between him and hell lessens—lessens every step; the lightnings from the Bible flash around him—but, *no feeling!* The thunder from Sinai roars—but, *NO FEELING!* The lurid fires of hell glare up in the distance—but, *NO FEELING!!!*—he is LET ALONE. Oh, my God! of all the curses of heaven, save me and my friends from the curse of being LET ALONE.

I mean, secondly, there will be no success in the ministry without the Spirit. There will be no real heavenly fire without divine influence. Whatever sparks of his own kindling there may be on the minister's soul. I care not however eloquent, however persuasive, however pathetic he may be—he may kindle up with all the fire of Cicero, and thunder with the eloquence of Demosthenes; he may have at his command all the range of Bible literature, be master of criticism, wield with giant intellect the doctrines of revelation, and all will be no more than the chirping of a grasshopper.

What is the best machinery without a moving power? What would your best railway engines do without a moving power? Of what use would be your great vessels on the deep without a moving power? And we tell you, that even all the grand machinery of the gospel will do *nothing* without a moving power—the *power of the Holy Ghost*. The soul lies embedded under thick layers of darkness, and bound up in

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fetters of iron; none but the Almighty Spirit can anticipate it from its bondage and snap its fetters; 'tis under the lightning flashes of the Spirit—under Holy Ghost-preaching, that the soul is made to cry out, What must I do to be saved?

Secondly, there is a certainty about the striving of the Spirit.

I tell you, no man can go to Hell fire till the Spirit has first striven with him, and given him up. That the Spirit strives with all is evident, from the following considerations: 1. Christ died for all. 2. The experience of both saints and sinners testify to it. 3. Salvation is impossible without it. 4. It is only on this ground that God can judge and condemn the wicked. He has been striving with you, and I have seen some characters here that have been grieving the Spirit of God. You are oppressed on my heart, and I have from my God a message to you. Oh, if ever I felt his blessed Spirit with me, I feel he is with you now!

1. The first character I name is the Backslider. I have been grieving the Spirit of God. I would not seek to arouse your passions to excite and frighten you; but I would first calmly appeal to your understandings. But, ah! why do I do this? Your judgments are engaged; you know your duty; and, if you go to hell, you will go there loaded with a halo of heavenly light. But I don't want to shut you out against me, neither do I want to drive you to despair. What a glory of high Heaven it is, that you are not in the deeps of hell! What a glory it is that you are in the house of God to-night! I cannot tell whether you belong to this congregation, or to some other, or to none; whether you are rich or poor, old or young; whether you fell by little and less, or whether you fell at once into some awful crime; whether you fell by tripping, by an act of dishonesty, or by whoremongering; this I know, you are a *Backslider*, and you are *here*. There are just two points about your case. You have been very miserable for the last three months, like a wandering dove, you have had no rest. Now, I tell you, you will soon be in your winding sheet, or converted to God. It will be the one or the other. My God has sent me with this message to you. The Devil has hold of you, and the Spirit of God has hold of you, and both are striving with you; one or the other will soon prevail. Oh, my brother! it will soon be Christ or the Devil, Heaven or hell, Salvation or Damnation. Oh! is there nothing that can reach you? Let me call your remembrance to the time when you were happy—happy as a prince—happy in God. You walked, and talked with God; and around him, as the central point of bliss, your spirit circled. With what joy did you look up to heaven as your home. Those were blessed days—but they are gone. I could say much to alarm you, but one poor sinner ought not to be harsh with another. I know that I myself ought to have been sent to hell years ago, but the Lord had mercy upon me, and pardoned my sins, and sanctified my soul, and has kept me for years; and now I say to you, with a tender heart, Oh, my brothers, you are on the edge of the pit, on the brink of the burning lake! Another step, and you may pass the verge, and

splash on the fiery wave. *Come away! COME AWAY!! Oh, COME AWAY TO JESUS!!!*

Your distressing case reminds me of an affecting incident connected with the explosion of an American steamer, a few years ago. The vessel was on her voyage from Savannah to New York. In a dangerous sea, and in the dead hour of night, the boiler burst, and about one hundred souls were launched into eternity. The vessel was torn to pieces; and upon a few fragments of the wreck, with the mast lying across it, a number of human beings floated out to sea. They continued to drift farther and farther from land, till nothing but sky and water met their view. During four days, the scorching sun poured his rays upon their almost naked bodies, till they were blistered. They had no food to satisfy the craving of hunger; their tongues were scorched with thirst; and to drink the salt water, they knew would only increase the dreadful feeling.

A hint was given by one of the sufferers that they should cast lots who should die for the sustenance of the rest. But the idea of eating the flesh and drinking the blood of a fellow being, was rejected with horror. As they were gazing intensely into the far-off horizon, they were cheered with what at first appeared a dark spot, but which soon brightened into a sail. They raised their little flag of distress; but it was unnoticed, and the vessel disappeared. After some time another hove in view, but the signal was not seen, and she vanished away. In like manner two others appeared, but, to their anguish, they also passed out of sight. "Hope deferred maketh the heart sick." After several hours elapsed, another sail appeared—it seemed as if it was pasted on the sky. Soon its shape altered; the outlines of a vessel could now be traced; and, to their trembling joy, seemed to be nearing them. Ah, the captain of that ship little thought how many eyes were fixed with a gaze of agony upon the white sail of his stately vessel! They hoisted their signal of distress once more, and uttered their feeble cries; but, alas, she also appeared to be shaping her course in another direction. One poor fellow, who had been dreadfully scalded, looked himself into despair, cried out, "She is gone," and laid himself down to die. The time of extremity was God's opportunity. One eye from the vessel caught the signal; the word was passed to the deck and resounded through the ship, "A wreck! a wreck!" In a few moments she began to bear down towards them. One of the sufferers, perceiving the change in her course, uttered the cry, "She sees us!" "She is coming towards us!"

Nearing them rapidly, the vessel loomed up within a short distance of them, and the clangour of the captain's trumpet rang over the waves, "Be of good cheer, I will save you!" I need scarcely tell you they were soon on board, fill with adoring gratitude to God, and thanksgiving to their deliverer. Your state of soul reminds me of the perilous condition of these shipwrecked passengers. You were sailing onward to heaven with a happy soul, and the breezes of grace were propitious. But an explosion took place, to the astonishment of heaven, and you

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"made shipwreck of faith and a good conscience." Thank God, you have not gone down to hell, like many other backsliders. You have floated out upon the mere fragments of your hopes, into the ocean of despair. You have grieved the Spirit, and of you it may be well said,—

His passage lies across the brink
Of many a threatening wave;
And hell expects to see him sink,
But Jesus lives to save!

Yes, "Jesus lives to save;" and it is written, "He is able to save to the uttermost." The promises have been obscured from the eye of your faith by strong temptation. Again and again you have found yourself unable to reach them; and, like the vessels which hovered for a little before the vision of those distressed persons, and then vanished; so have the promises to your apprehension. But the God of the promises is at hand. If we could but induce you to repent—to lift up your signal of distress, your signal would be seen in heaven. The Captain of your salvation would draw nigh; and you would exclaim, "He sees me! He sees me! He is coming towards me! He is, See!

Lo! on the wings of love he flies,
And brings salvation nigh.

Oh! you would hear the voice of your Great Deliverer, saying, "Be of good cheer, I will save you." But, persist in grieving the Holy Ghost, and your doom is sealed.

2. There is another character in this congregation. I don't know whether you are a backslider or not. You may be decent in your conduct; you may respect religion—believe in its great, awful, and solemn verities, but you are undecided, you halt. You have a father and a mother unconverted, who, in all probability, would give their hearts to God if you would lead the way. You have been laid on a bed of affliction; you solemnly promised God to serve him, but your resurrection to health was a resurrection to sin. God has been striving to convert you, to make your conversion instrumental in the salvation of your parents, but you have stood out; and my God has sent me solemnly to warn you against the soul-destroying sin of putting off. I tell you, if you refuse, God will speedily send Death,—the winding-sheet,—the coffin,—the white border round your face,—the shut eye,—the blanched cheek,—the cold, cold grave. I tell you, if you refuse to let God preach a sermon to your parents from your conversion, He will preach a sermon to them from that coffin, from your pale corpse, from your shut eye, your bordered face, your blanched cheek, your yawning grave. I tell you, it will soon be the one or the other,—*Conversion* or *Damnation*. Which shall it be? Will you now yield to God? You delay,—you grieve the blessed Spirit; and he comes less and less powerfully every time. God says, My Spirit shall not always strive with man. Come, Oh my God! and save this halting soul.

3. There is another character in this congregation deeply impressed on my heart. You are a Pew-holder, and a friend to the preachers. I hope you are not too great a friend. I mean, you invite them to your homes on Sunday evening, after preaching, to your hospitality, to your ale, and wine. They make engagements to take supper with you, previous to going to their appointments; their word must be kept, and the consequence is, the prayer meeting is left, penitents are not led to Jesus, and the churches do not flourish. Ah, this hospitality! The ale and wine have been the bane of Methodist preachers, and the curse of Methodism. I tell you, you are a curse to the churches. I don't mean to say that you intend to do the preachers harm. No; you love the ministers, and I honour you for it. If you saw one of them poorly clad, you would put your hand in your pocket and give him a suit of clothes. I say, I honour you for your love to God's servants; still, your table, your ale, your wine, have proved a snare. The Lord save you from being a curse to his Church! You are a Pew-holder,—you have had a seat in God's house for the last fifteen years. I might go farther,—no; I stop just there,—fifteen years,—just fifteen years. I will not attempt to say how much evil you have done by your example; how many souls you have prevented from joining the people of God; how much you have impeded the Redeemer's progress. I will not stop to say why God sent leanness into your soul; why you have not prospered in business; nor why God has cursed your property, and cursed your family. For fifteen years the blessed Spirit has been wooing, alluring, arguing, and trying to turn you to God; but, while this planet has rolled round the sun fifteen times, you have been fighting against God! Let me now solemnly, in the sight of high Heaven, ask you,—

1st. How long do you mean to remain as you are?

2nd. How long do you mean to rebel against God?

Depend upon it matters will not continue long as they are. God has a controversy with you; He will ere long bring it to a close; the crisis is approaching. If you intend to be saved, you must make haste, and delay not. Your conscience is almost seared; sermons are scarcely of any use to you; under the soul-subduing scenes of Calvary you melt not; the judgments of God make upon you but little impression. Your damnation slumbereth not. This message to you, if not the savour of life unto life, will be of death unto death. Oh! I am afraid I am preparing some of you for the fever, the pestilence, the winding sheet; I mean you who are resisting the Spirit. You have been listening to the knockings—the knockings of the Holy Ghost; but you have closed and barred up the door of your heart. The last knocking will come, for the Lord said, My Spirit shall not always strive with man. Great God! touch to-night this Pew-holder's heart.

4. One character more. You have joined some Church; you pass for a Christian; you go the round of Christian duties; but you have no Happiness, no living Joy, no bright Hope, no burning Love. I ask you,

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do you think you have ever been converted? When was it? Under what circumstances did it take place? Is it possible that such a change could have taken place, and you know nothing of it? There was a time when the Spirit strove with you. Yes, he has been striving with you by that *hard heart*, that *lean soul*, that *standing doubt*. And you cannot tell but that the influence that is now moving on your soul, may be the *last effort* Heaven may make for your salvation. What I want to do to-night, is to arouse you to a sense of the peril of your situation. What can be done to awaken you from your deep and deathlike slumbers? You are *here*,—here before God. I have described your character—you know it. You have a witness in your own bosom. You feel—you know you are not right; but it is not too late—you may yet be saved. But, when the Spirit is gone, damnation follows.

I proceed to state the results of resisting God's Holy Spirit.

II.—THE DREADFUL EVENT PREDICTED,—THE WITHDRAWAL OF THE SPIRIT.

First, The fact. Under the Jewish economy there was a law of extremity; there were sins for which there was no forgiveness,—no blood, no lamb, no sacrifice, no provision made! Is there such a law under the Christian dispensation? I answer, there is; and that law Jesus Christ read up eighteen hundred years ago. It is contained in John xii. 31; "All manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men, but the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost shall not be forgiven unto men." This sin is not some sudden work, not some one deed, but a quenching of the Spirit—a settled resistance, day by day, till the blessed Spirit is vexed, quenched, driven away. Dr. Chalmers observes, on this subject, "The sin against the Holy Ghost is not some awful and irrevocable deed, around which a disordered fancy has thrown a superstitious array, and which beams in deeper terror upon the eye of the mind from the very obscurity by which it is encompassed." No; it is resisting the Holy wooer, till he has left us alone: than being left alone by the Spirit, there is but one thing more awful can happen to a sinner, and that is DAMNATION. I again say, nothing this side of *Hell-fire*, is so bad as to be given up by the Spirit.

Secondly, The Consequences.

1. Left without feeling: as the Bible says, *past feeling*.
2. Left without desire.
3. He will die very suddenly.

I believe in my soul that the cause of multitudes of sudden deaths is the quenching of the Spirit. 1 John v. 16, 17. "There is a sin unto death; I do not say that he shall pray for it."

This sin may be of a two-fold character, relating to both body and soul. Relating first, to the body. God lays that young woman on the bed of death in the morning of her days—in the very bloom of life; she has

sinned a sin unto the death of the body. There, amidst the pain of a dissolving frame, she sheds tears of bitter repentance, and there in that last struggle—in life's last hour, finds mercy. She is just saved—saved as by the skin of her teeth: the soul saved, the body destroyed. Take care that some of you do not go to the grave before your time.

I hope, in introducing my own experience here, I shall not be thought guilty of egotism. I have had, for years, a list of persons to *pray for*; and, when one dies, I strike off that name, and put on another,—letter after letter comes announcing the death of some one or other of them. Oh, how many has death struck off my list! I hope you Christians have your lists. Whether you have or not, the great Jesus has you all upon his list, and he pleads for you; but there is a limit to his pleading. He is represented in the parable of the barren fig-tree, as saying, "Let it alone this year also, and if it bring forth fruit, well; but if not, after that thou shalt cut it down." As soon as ever Jesus shall strike you off his list, the Holy Ghost will give you up: then, when the Holy Ghost gives you up, damnation follows,—this is the consequence. I ask, then, will you come out? Come out boldly, and take your stand for God. You, backsliders; you who are undecided, who stand in the way of the conversion of your father and mother; you, pew-holder; you, unconverted professors; will you decide for Christ?—Decide now. I tell you, you are reaching a point on which your destiny turns; the fearful crisis approaches that decides your fate. Yes, soon it will be with you *conversion or damnation*. I know some of you do not like this kind of preaching. I know I may be sinking in the estimation of many intelligent persons in this congregation. I have suffered more for this kind of prophetic preaching than for any thing else; but I have weighed well the consequences. I know what will win human applause, and I am willing to make the sacrifice. I am willing to be a fool for Christ's sake. Ah, says one, you are doing this for effect! *Amen! AMEN!* Before earth, heaven, and hell, I proclaim it, *I AM AIMING AT EFFECT.*

Now, I tell you, when the Spirit has ceased to strive with you, you will present, on your dying bed, a horrible spectacle. Not long since, in a certain town, a man was dying—a man who respected religion, who had sat in the house of God for years; and, as his end approached, his mind was in a fearful state. One of the members connected with the chapel where he sat, went to see him, and freely held out to him the promises, and told him salvation was free as the air. The dying man waved his hand and said, "Stop! stop! I could believe all you say, were I not offering the *drugs of life to God*." Death seized him, and the last words he was heard to utter were, "I could believe all you say were I not offering the *drugs of life to God*." And you whom I now address, I tell you, you are sinners against God. I do not charge you with swearing, with sabbath-breaking, with whoremongering, with adultery; but you are sinners. And what is your sin? I answer, it is *mental rebellion*—you refuse to yield to God's claims. Who is the greatest sinner in the

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universe? Why, the Devil. And what was the sin of the Devil? *Mental rebellion*. Some time ago a number of ministers met together for the purpose of holding revival meetings. One of those ministers had a son whose heart was unsubdued. He had been trained up at their family altar; he had listened from time to time to the word of God; had heard from day to day the pleadings of his Father with heaven for his conversion; yet he still stood out. He had constantly before him the holy example of a devoted father and mother; and, in answer to their private intercessions for him, had been the subject of deep convictions; but *he resisted the Spirit*. He was seen one night at the revival meeting. One of the ministers entreated him to give his heart to God; but, in sullen rebellion, he still resisted. When the meeting closed, and he returned home, his anxious mother got him alone, and urged him to yield to God (you know how mothers can plead). He gave that mother a look as fierce as that of a demon, and said, "Mother, I tell you I would rather be *damned than yield*." No sooner had the words escaped his lips than he stumbled, and fell at her feet. When she raised him up he was a *corpse*,—his face was blanched in *death*. But I have not told you all; the last words she heard him say were, "*I am damned, I am damned*." Why such a tender mother's heart was permitted to be wrung with anguish so deep, God only knows. Now, what was the sin of that young man? Why, *mental rebellion*.

God's Holy Spirit is striving now with you, backslider; with you that are undecided; with you, pew-holders; with you, unconverted professors; and you refuse to yield. What is the sin you are now deliberately committing! Why, *mental rebellion*. Now, I ask you, will you meet me in the school-room below this chapel; as soon as this service shall close, will you meet me in the school-room below, to seek the forgiveness of your sins? I tell you, if you leave this chapel to-night unsaved, you are guilty of *mental rebellion*. The young man said in words, "I would rather be damned than yield." You say, by conduct that speaks louder than words, "*I would rather be damned than yield*." I leave the great Author of the Universe, before whose tribunal you must stand; the Judge of men, to decide which is the greatest sinner, *you* or *him*. "And the Lord said, My Spirit shall not always strive with men."

THE STANDING DOUBT.

"Rejoice evermore, pray without ceasing, in every thing give thanks, for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you."—1 Thes. v. 16, 17, 18.

Now that is a religion worth having. It is the sum and substance of all true religion. It is the religion of the Bible the religion of heaven. I again repeat, such a religion as my text describes, is a religion worth having; and if a man has it, he will know it. Do you think it is possible for a man to rejoice evermore, pray without ceasing, and in every thing give thanks, and not know it? The religion of the New Testament is the simplest thing in the world. It is as open as the day. It seems to say to me,—read me, criticise me, embrace me, and I will make you happy; and if she makes you happy, will you not know it? You cannot, then, have religion and not know it. Our text contains two ways—two glorious ways, by which the soul ascends to God,—Prayer and Gratitude. It contains three links of Christian experience,—Joy, Prayer, Thanksgiving. They all depend one upon the other; you cannot destroy one without destroying the whole. If you stop praying, you will soon stop thanking; and if you stop thanking, you will soon stop rejoicing; cease to rejoice, and the voice of thanksgiving will be hushed, and the spirit of prayer will droop and die. Then we say, "Rejoice evermore, pray without ceasing," &c.

I.—SHOW THAT IT IS THE PRIVILEGE OF THE CHRISTIAN TO REJOICE EVERMORE.

II.—STATE THE REASONS WHY SO MANY PROFESSORS DO NOT ATTAIN TO THIS HAPPY STATE.

First, the Privilege.

"Were we called upon to embody and delineate the spirit of the gospel, we would not dip our pencil in the black dye of melancholy, to paint a dark and dismal figure with cloudy countenance and dismal brow, clothed in sable, and heaving sighs, with a downcast look and a mournful step, as if the world were one wide burial ground, and her pathway was continually among graves; and the only light that gleamed upon that path was the ghastly light that glimmered in a charnel house; and the only

sound that met her ear was the shriek of the death struggle, and the chaunt of the funeral dirge. No; I would dip my pencil in the loveliest hues of heaven, to paint a bright and beautiful spirit from the skies, with the love of God sparkling on her countenance, and the glory of God beaming on her brow; clothed with garments of light, and crowned with a wreath of amaranth; with a smile of such sweet serenity as would tell that all within was peace,—the *peace of God*; and an aspect of holy gladness caught from every sight of beauty and every sound of melody; with a buoyant step becoming a traveller to the skies, and an upward look raised rejoicingly to Him who is her hope and happiness, and to that heaven from which she came, and to which she is returning; walking amidst earth's snares with white robes unspotted by its defilements, or descending from her high and holy communings with God, to minister to man's welfare as heaven's ministering spirit of mercy—entering the abodes of misery, and making the broken heart to sing for joy; visiting the dwellings of rejoicing, and hallowing all their happiness with the smile of God." Religion is from heaven; she walks amidst the murky gloom of earth; she is the true philosopher's stone, converting every thing to gold; she is described in our text as imparting perpetual joy,—*"Rejoice evermore."* If you want this perpetual joy, you must *cultivate it*; you must keep breathing towards heaven after it. You, I say, must *cultivate it*; and, like every thing else, it will improve by practice. There are within your reach thousands of considerations calculated to increase your joy—considerations from within, without, the past, present, the future, hell, earth, heaven, and one spot above all others—*Calvary*. Very few seem to understand this happy philosophy, very few learn this blessed art; and, consequently, they are *up* one day and *down* another. Life with them is a chequered scene, full of lights and shadows; sadness, gloom, and despair, mingled with a few gleams of joy; sorrow, however, extends its dark shadow over the greater part of life, and the sunny spots are few and far between. For a long time this was my own experience; sometimes I was happy, but the momentary joy I felt was followed by days of darkness and distress. But God has led me into a higher and happier state. My soul is very happy. Oh, how constantly happy am I! I have proved it by sea and by land, in perils and in sunshine. I have been brought into circumstances where all human helps failed; and, when death has threatened, my soul has been happy. I have been wandering for some time, a stranger in a strange land, but the joy of the Lord has been my strength; my strength in travelling, in labouring, in suffering; my strength in praying, in preaching; and, when the last mortal struggle shall come—when death shall chill the current of life—when my heart and flesh shall fail; I doubt not but even then, the joy of the Lord shall be my strength. The joy of the Lord is a spring of happiness; rainbow-like, it shines brightest amidst the darkest gloom, and death itself will only make it celestial and immortal.

You never glorify God by fretting away your little hour, and by murmuring at your lot. If a gentleman turns out his servant, thin, lean,

meager, shabbily dressed, and ill-favoured, the people say, "Ah, they have a *poor shop* of it! We don't envy *them* their lot! Their looks tell what sort of a master they have;" but if he turns them out well clothed, with fine ruddy countenances, robust, strong, and healthy in appearance, "Ah!" say the people, "they have rare times of it; now *they* do their master credit; it's worth while being a servant to such a master as that!" It is the happy Christian that honours his religion and his God. The world sees that he has a happiness to which they are strangers. "Rejoice in the Lord always, and again I say rejoice." Phil. iv. 4. "O come, and let us sing unto the Lord; let us make a joyful noise unto the Rock of our salvation." Ps. xcv. 1. "Make a joyful noise unto the Lord all ye lands, serve the Lord with gladness, and come before his presence with singing." Ps. cxviii. 4. Be glad in the Lord, and rejoice ye righteous, and shout for joy all ye that are upright in heart." Ps. xxxiii. 1. "Let the saints be joyful in glory, let them sing aloud upon their beds." Ps. cxlix. 5. "Finally, my brethren, rejoice in the Lord." Phil. iii. 1. "Let the priest be clothed with righteousness, and shout about for joy. 'Rejoice evermore.'" "Do you think," says one, "that all Christians have this joy?" I answer, no; I never thought so. If you could follow many of them into the domestic circle—into the scenes of business; could you draw aside the veil and look at them there; would you hear expressions of joy breaking forth from their lips? No; you would hear *grumble, grumble,—grumbling* at every thing. If this gloomy, repining state of mind, in which multitudes of professing Christians indulge, were put into words; if what the heart says—for the heart often says to God what the lips would not for worlds utter; and remember, God is always listening to the silent but most expressive language of the heart. Now a believer's heart, when repining, says to God (Oh, may yours never speak it to Him), God of all my blessings—God of my salvation, I believe that the disposal of all the events of my life is in Thy hands, and that thou hast promised to make them all work together for my good; but still I am so dissatisfied with the manner in which thou art arranging those events, there is so much undeserved harshness—unnecessary severity in Thy dealings with me, that I wish either that Thou wouldst alter Thy mode of treatment, or that the guardianship were taken out of thy hands. Is not this the appalling language of a repining heart? Ough! He ever to read it in your heart, believer, who for your everlasting happiness has drained the life-blood of his own? Think, then, how it must wound Him to look into your heart, and see that after all he has done, *all* he has suffered for you, He has failed to win for Himself your acquiescence, your confidence, your supreme affection. Well, whatever be the course you pursue, here is God's will about you—"Rejoice evermore, pray without ceasing, in every thing give thanks, for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you." Here is the will, signed, sealed, and delivered over to you. Rejoice evermore! this is the will of God concerning you,—but when? When you come up to heaven? No; I answer, *now*! It is God's will this moment concerning

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II.—State the reasons why so many professors do not attain to this happy state of experience.

First. Many professors in the Christian church have never been born again. This is a fact as true as it is painful. Conscience lifts up its warning voice; the Spirit flashes conviction across their minds; or, under some alarming providence, or Holy Ghost-sermon, they become alarmed, convinced of sin; and, under the influence of these feelings, they connect themselves with the people of God, and suppose that all is right. They are deceived, and they deceive others. 'Tis true, there is a great change in them—a change pervading their whole conduct. 'Tis true there is stillness, but it is the stillness of death; there is peace, but it is the peace of the tomb. The circle of ceremonies is filled up, but you never hear them say, Oh, how I love the *doset*! All hail, sacred hour of devotion! Were you to listen ever so attentively, you would never hear them exclaiming, O, precious sabbath! How calm! How sacred! How holy thy hours! How my soul revels in thy hallowed exercises! When wilt thou arrive? No; their religion is a religion of fear, and all the hopes they have of heaven are based on their fancied freedom from evil; on reformation; on profession. They are proof against every argument, and every appeal; their profession acts like a lightning conductor. See! see! that old thatched house there in the distance; look closely at it, and you will see a little black rod running up along the side of it, from the bottom to the very top, and extending itself above the chimney. It is a lightning conductor: it attracts and leads off the burning element. Ah! your profession has many a time acted like the lightning conductor! When God's servants, under the influence of the Holy Ghost, have made the lightnings of divine truth flash upon you that would have demolished your refuge of lies, discovered to you your guilty state, and have led you to the blood of Christ, up went your lightning conductor, and every impression was evaded. You know

nothing of deep, solid spiritual joy; you cannot rejoice evermore; and one reason is, you have never been born again; and, until this is the case, you may as well try to unite *fire and water, heaven and hell*,—make *God* and the Devil shake hands,—as try to rejoice evermore. Bring together wind and water, and you will have a storm; bring into contact fire and water, and you will have a commotion; bring the holy principles of Christianity, and an unholy heart, and you will have a commotion, a storm, a tempest; they cannot agree, they cannot harmonize: either you must change the religion or change the heart—they cannot unite. I tell you, you may as well try to make the Poles meet, stop the winds in their course, roll back the tide, or pluck the sun from the heavens, *as perpetually to rejoice without the new birth*. “Marvel not that I say unto you, ye must be born again.”

2. Another reason why so many professors do not rejoice evermore is, they have a **STANDING DOUBT** of their acceptance with God,—a doubt as to whether they are born again; and therefore they cannot rejoice evermore. Now, that is a bit of real mental philosophy. “What do you mean,” says one by a standing doubt?” I answer, I mean that the doubt has something to stand upon; that is, you cannot tell the time and place of your conversion. “Yes,” says one, “I can tell the very time and place where God pardoned my sins, but I cannot rejoice evermore.” Ah! I know what you are; you are a backslider! The devil could tell you that he was once in heaven—once a sun of the morning—once an archangel in glory. That he once sung sweetly amidst the bowers of Eden—that he once raised the high hallelujahs of heaven; but what of that, he is a *devil now*. And what is it that you can tell the time, place and circumstances of your conversion, you are a backslider now!

A Standing Doubt! When did you get converted? In what year of our Lord was it? In what month? On what day was it? In what place? In what town did it happen? You know the place of your natural birth. You could point out the place, town, room, hour, and perhaps the very minute; and probably you keep an anniversary of your Birth-day. Oh! I love to see families do that; I love to hear the voice of joy and melody in their Tabernacles, while they commemorate the Birth-day of one of the happy group; you do this, but then you have no spiritual Birth-day anniversary. “But sir,” says one, “is that essential to Religion?” I answer why—No! no!—not essential like repentance, and faith; but very desirable. I have carefully examined this point; I have had an opportunity of conversing with some thousands on the state of their experience; and I am prepared to affirm that in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred where they could not tell the time and place of their spiritual Birth, I have found them in a very doubtful state of experience. While I was dining the other day at a friend’s house, the wife and children were all looking cheerful and happy, the husband very depressed and melancholy; presently he looked at me and said, “Oh sir! I don’t know what to make of this preaching! You have completely shut

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me up in a corner, and you only just left me one little loop hole to creep out at." Whatever may be the depressions produced in minds by this kind of preaching, *such is the fact!* just about *one out of a hundred!* I hold that the work of conversion is so momentous, that no man can pass through it, and not know it. The Bible speaks of it as a passing from darkness, to light; from the Devil, to Christ; from bondage, to liberty; from Death, to Life! You cannot drink the wormwood and the gall, you cannot cry for mercy, you cannot experience the new creation, you cannot pass through all these asleep. Is there a sailor here? I believe there is. Do you remember when your vessel dashed upon a rock, and become a wreck? Plunged in the boiling deep, you struggled through the foaming waves and reached that rock. There you sat down drenched, chilled, exhausted—you expected to perish. A vessel hove in sight—you waved your handkerchief—one of the crew saw you—the boat was lowered—the rope was thrown out to you—you tied it round your waist and sprang into the sea—you were drawn out and saved. Can you forget that deliverance? No! never! never! While memory holds its seat, it will engraven there. And, I ask the professor, can you forget when you were pardoned?—when you were saved from hell?—when you obtained a title to heaven?—when you underwent the change that determines your destiny? But, ah! you cannot recollect the *time* and *place* of the great event. There is still that *standing doubt*,—like Aaron's rod, it swallows up everything. Like Pharaoh's seven lean kine, it devours all—it follows you like your shadow. You retire to your closet to hold communion with God: you confess your failing; you look at the great blessings of salvation; your soul kindles with strong desire; you ask God to bestow these blessings upon you; but up comes the standing doubt. You come to the house of God you hear the messenger of heaven opening up the great privileges of the saints; you see how infinitely superior they are to aught that earth can bestow; and you would rejoice, but there's that standing doubt. Then you think of heaven—of that *better land*—of the society of the blessed—of the employment of the redeemed—of the visions of God—of the eternity of glory—of the fadeless crowns: you would bless God for the prospect, and "break out into a song," but up comes the *standing doubt*,—perhaps I am not a Christian; if not heaven is not mine. You think of hell, the fire, the gnawing worm, the burning wrath of God, the society of devils, the cry of despair, the shrieks of the lost, the howling of the damned, the eternity of death, the universal wail, the groans of boundless woe awakening, echoing, rolling around the world of death. "But, ah!" say you, "I am a professor, I am a Christian,—I shall be saved from that hell. But up comes the *standing doubt*,—perhaps I am; I think I am; I trust I am; but I don't know. Well then, 'tis only perhaps I shall escape it; I think I shall escape; I trust I shall escape; but I don't know. Ah! there's the *standing doubt!* You cannot rejoice evermore. Get this matter settled—get it settled at once." End this controversy with heaven. Fly, fly to the blood—the blood, the blood of the Lamb. I tell you, you take not care, this

standing doubt will get you into hell after all. Now, you are pardoned, or you are not pardoned,—you are condemned, or you are justified. If there was a world where there was neither a God nor a Devil—neither sin nor holiness; if there was some middle state—some border land, where you would be asked no questions about your conduct; where there would be no open books—no judgment day; then you might have gone on with this *standing doubt*. But there is no border land. There is however a judgment day. There are books to be opened. There is a Judge—an omniscient Judge. And its all near at hand. Oh! will you get this standing doubt removed? Will you get this great question set at rest?

The congregation will please to kneel down,—Come, now, every one of you. Now, my God here they are before thee. Give me souls—give me souls, or I die. Put thy net around them; Thou has made us fishers of men. Now, will you who are seeking pardon, the witness of the Spirit, and purity of heart—you three classes; will you meet me exactly at two o'clock this afternoon in my select meeting, in the band-room below? Now, are you promising God? Some of you are—I know some of you are, but not enough. I hold you to it. I want you to promise my God that you will meet me in my select meeting at two o'clock, in the band-room below. I will not detain you longer, but pronounce the benediction. My God help you.

The grace of our Lord, &c.

THE STING OF DEATH.

"Therefore, leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on to perfection; not laying again the foundation of repentance from sin and dead works."—Heb. vi. 1.

"The sting of death is sin."—1 Cor. xv. 56.

A SLIGHT acquaintance with man will convince us of the truth of two propositions.

First, That every man is labouring to obtain some object.

Second, That according to the intensity of the interest he feels in the object, will be his delight in pursuing it. It is the deep interest he feels in the object that sweetens the toil, beguiles the time, and cheers him.

These two propositions lie at the foundation of all human effort—they pervade the entire of our actions.

A few illustrations of this point.

Jacob engaged with Laban to serve him seven years for Rachel. The object before him was Rachel; and though the sun scorched him by day,

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and the frost withered him by night, it is said, "Jacob served seven years for Rachel, and they seemed to him but a few days, for the love he had to her." The deep interest he felt in the object of his pursuit gave wings to time, and made years fly as days. Again, a man is deep in debt, and the object he has before him is to "owe no man anything"—to be able to look every man boldly in the face. To accomplish this, what sacrifices will he not make; what labour and toil will he not endure! The deep interest he feels in the attainment of his object, calls him to toil ere the sun has yet risen; hurries him on through the whirl of business; braces his spirit; nerves his arm; and sweetens all his labours.

The merchant is looking onward to retirement from business, when, in the calm evening of life, he can sit down and enjoy his neat little country seat; that is the object before him. The interest he feels in its attainment, gives zest to his jaded spirit, and throws a charm over what would otherwise be, from year to year, one dull scene of monotony.

The same principle actuates the warrior on the battle-field. His object is military glory—a name in the annals of fame—the applause of the brave. To accomplish this, he will bid adieu to the loved scenes of home, the smiling babe, the heart-broken wife. He will brave the perils of the deep; and, in the face of the gleaming spear, the murderous battle shout, the shower of death, the roaring cannon's mouth, he will rush to victory or to death; and all to obtain the laurels of earthly, perishing fame. And were I to say that every real Christian in this congregation was not labouring to attain an object, your experience would rise up and contradict me. You have an object before you,—a happy dying hour; rest after the storms of life are past—rest now and rest hereafter—sweet rest in the calm of heaven. A crown, a brilliant crown, a crown of life, "a crown of glory that fadeth not away." Heaven! Heaven!

Where flesh and blood hath never been—
Where mortal eye hath never seen.
A mental sphere—a flood of light,
A sea of glory, dazzling bright.

That is the object before you; and, if you would secure it, you must get rid of the sting of death,—you must go on to perfection.

We lay down, then, for our discussion, one proposition,—

THAT IF A HAPPY AND TRIUMPHANT DEATH-BED BE DESIRABLE, AND IF A GLOOMY AND MISERABLE DEATH-BED IS TO BE DEPRECATED, THEN GO ON TO PERFECTION.

We do not mean to dwell upon the nature of Christian Perfection upon a dying hour. How solemn is life's last hour. The journey is ended; the immortal candidate is on life's last shore. The cold and bitter flood lies between him and the better land; and, from thence, he has to review all the road along which he has travelled. Memory retouches all the past; and, in a few minutes, he seems to live the whole of life over again. The scenes long forgotten, now, in his dying hour, gather around him in vivid reality; and to be able to look calmly on Death, with the dart gleam-

ing in his uplifted hand, and not be afraid, is the very perfection of religion. Poor humanity may, for a moment shudder; the cold shivering of mortality may come over it; but the grace of God can enable the Christian, to exclaim, "To die is gain." See that sun setting in the western sky; the blue arch is cloudless; every thing seems hushed, serene, and quiet; nature bathing in his parting beams. Oh! how sublime the scene! Still more sublime is the sight of a Christian *dying happy in God*—"Living in brighter day to rise." There is one piece of poetry which beautifully describes the Christian's happy close.

Vital spark of heavenly flame;
Quit, oh! quit this mortal frame;
Trembling, hoping, lingering, flying,
Oh, the pain—the bliss of dying;
Cease, fond nature, cease thy strife,
And let me languish into life.

Hark! they whisper, angels say
Sister spirit, come away!
What is this absorbs me quite,
Steals my senses, shuts my sight,
Drowns my spirits, draws my breath;
Tell me, my soul, can this be death?

The world recedes, and disappears:
Heaven opens on my eyes, my ears
With sounds seraphic ring.—

The Spirit has now launched into eternity, it has commenced its upward flight, the earth, like a little dark spot grows less and less; Heaven opens upon the vision, the new Jerusalem is now in sight, the pearly gates, the jasper walls, the angelic watchmen, all flaming with the glory of God, are seen floating far away in the blue ether piled against the light. Now the heavenly music—music sweeter than any the earth can produce bursts upon the ear; now she wants to speed her flight, she exclaims,—

Lend, lend your wings, I mount! I fly!
O, grave where is thy victory?
Oh, death where is thy sting?

Were I to repeat this over again, there is not a person here, however refined his taste, but would say, ah! that is beautiful poetry, that will live as long as the English language shall last; "but," says one, "It is poetry after all, I like sober prose and sound doctrine; I have seen people die, but never like that; I have seen the glazed eyes, the blanched cheek, the withered face; I have heard the death rattle gurgle in the throat, and have seen the sinking of the frame into the quiet of death, and sometimes like a faint smile sitting over the countenance; but never have I found anything like that described in the poetry just quoted." To show you that the speechless poetry above does not go beyond the truth, that a holy Christian can die happy, I will refer you to one fact,—When looking over my papers, I found an account written eight or nine years ago; the

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source whence I obtained it gave me the fullest assurance of its truth. An infidel's son, many miles distant from his father's house, heard of the illness of his mother, and hastened home; the sun was just rising over his native hills when he alighted in the front of his father's mansion; his sister flew towards him, pressed him to her heart, and led the way to the sick room of his mother; the young infidel stepped forward to the bed, she seemed dying, but pale and emaciated; he almost concluded her dead, till a sweet smile played upon her countenance, her lips moved, he leaned over, and heard her say: "I come! I come!" opening her eyes gently; "Oh, I thought I was going." "Where, mother?" he whispered, (she had not recognised him, but supposed it was his sister.) "Hark!" she said, and he instinctively leaned forwards,—

"Hark! they whisper, angels say,
Sister spirit come away."

"I come to join your everlasting songs!" Again he heard his mother's voice, nor could he resist the attractive sound, but was there in time to hear,

"Then shall I see, and hear, and know,
All I desired, and wished below."

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Overcome by his feelings, he left the room for a time; on returning, his mother, who had been made acquainted with his arrival, received him with a cheerful smile, and said,—"One thing more I desired of the Lord, and he hath given me the desire of my heart."

The awful hour of dissolution had come, and after receiving the whole of her family around her bed, her last advice and parting blessing was then given, beginning with the youngest and speaking to them one by one, till she came to the eldest—the infidel. Tears, which he tried in vain to repress, gushed from his eyes, as he thought to himself,—My mother thinks mine a hopeless case, and desires to leave me to pursue my chosen path to ruin. Again he endeavoured to choke his emotions, but tears, and the inward monitor suggested,—

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He rose to leave the room; but the eye, the heart, the undying love of an expiring mother followed him; she called him back, and bid him be seated by her side, making some allusion to his infidelity. She took him by the hand and said, "My son, I know you are an infidel,—I know you reject the Bible, as a revelation from God,—I have watched with painful interest the progress of skepticism in your mind,—I feel for you all that a mother in my circumstances can feel. The icy chill of death is now creeping over my frame; this is the last effort of my maternal love. Time is fast receding, eternity opening to my view. What I do must be done quickly; the grave is ready for me; my house is set in order; all my work is done on earth except a few parting words to my first-born. Let me ask you one question, which I wish you to answer to God and

your own conscience.—*Do you wish your mother to die a believer in the dark creed of Voltaire or Paine? If so, step forward with me to the tomb, which, in the light of infidelity, is as dark as darkness itself. Death—an eternal sleep—the utter extinction of being—this thinking, reasoning mind, capable of so much expansion and enjoyment, must go out like an expiring taper—cease to exist! There is nothing in heaven or earth can give a ray of light to an expiring infidel.*" It was now the Holy Ghost, and conscience applied the sentiment with power.

"Dost thou feel these arguments, Lorenzo?"
Or is there nought but vengeance can be felt?

But, she continued, "While life recedes, my hopes—my hopes—my confidence in God strengthens. Peace, like a river, pours its balmy influence over me; eternity and immortal life open on my delighted vision; unutterable thoughts of God and heaven fill my already expanded capacities. I feel the assurance that God is my Father, Christ my Saviour, and the Holy Ghost my Comforter. I shall soon have an unclouded vision of the glory of God's palaces. All that is now dark, or deep, or high, to my present limited capacities, will be then unfolded and understood; nature, providence, and grace will be themes for eternal research; the perfections and attributes of God an endless intellectual feast; redemption an eternal song. The resurrection has rolled away the stone from the sepulchre, and illumined the dark inclosure—has swallowed up death in victory. My Saviour, Jesus!—the Friend of sinners is present, is sweet! is s-w-e-e-t * * *! O, my son,"—She would have proceeded, gasped, declined upon her pillow. He called the family, but the precious mother had departed; a smile of hope, peace and joy rested upon her features. His father sank down upon a chair; the pious sister, with a face beaming with religious emotion, gently closed her eyes, and all was still. The young man stood *eye-struck*. He saw how the religion of the Bible could support in a dying hour. He felt himself a lost sinner, but discovered the Saviour of sinners revealed in the long neglected Bible,—he was an infidel no longer. Such is the end of a holy Christian! Still, it must be confessed, that multitudes within the pale of the churches of Protestantism, yea, and even within the pale of the Methodist churches, do not die like this—do not honor either God or religion much in their deaths. It is no good to conceal the fact, there are a great many painful, gloomy, death-bed scenes; a great number of persons whose sun sets under a cloud. A great many professors of religion are so immersed in business, that, when suddenly called to die, instead of passing full into the heavenly port, they hold on to life like a poor wrecked mariner to the rock on which he is cast, till the last wave comes and washes him off into the ocean.

The facts of the death-beds of many professors are too painful to bring so light; they are concealed—they are hushed up. You must go to a second hand for the accounts of their death; their friends draw a veil over

their closing hours. I wonder not at their painful death: they could not bear in life the searching truths of God's word; and, if men cannot bear searching truth—a strict examination—the scrutiny of conscience in the hour of affliction, how can they do in the swellings of Jordan?

O, could we make our doubts remove
These gloomy thoughts that rise,
And see the Canaan that we love
With unobscured eyes;
But, tim'rous mortal, start, and shrink
To cross this narrow sea;
And linger, shivering on the brink,
And fear to launch away.

The same poet, in another place, says,—

O, what are all my sufferings here,
If, Lord, thou count'st me meet.

Ah! it is the want of meekness! the gloomy doubts! the dread uncertainty! that makes life's last hour so unhappy! There she lies lingering, shivering at the port, afraid to launch away. There she lies enduring the sting of death. The heart is not purified, sin is not all gone, and sin arms death with power. Never, till you are holy, will you be able to look upon death and not be afraid! Brethren, heaven is a sanctuary of purity—a sanctuary guarded with all jealousies of the Godhead; and, were you to dare to approach it without purity, fire would break forth from the throne, and with holy indignation, repel your approach. To a soul not purified from all sin, death is armed with a sting; and, oh, how it will harass, and goad, and sting the soul in the hour of death! I was once called to visit one of my congregation when she was dying. As I entered the room she fastened her eyes upon me, and gave me such a look as I shall never forget. She cried out, "Oh! Mr. Caughey, the sting of death; death has a sting!" Yes, it has a sting that tortures the soul in that awful hour. Ah, that was a striking comment on this text! And what is it that gives a sting to death? Is it not recollections of misimproved opportunities, abused mercies, indulged temptation, untruthfulness, unfaithfulness in the work of God. Ah, the Christian looks back upon the Sodom he has left, and onward to the bleak, untravelled eternity before him! Death is life's last shore; and, as he lingers there, his mind retraces the journey he has travelled; and all that seemed faded and indistinct, is retouched by conscience; those things that appeared, amidst the bustle of life, but trifling, now seem awfully magnified; they are now viewed in the light of eternity. Ah! it is the holiness of the law by which they have to be judged, the purity of God with whom they have to do, that exhibits those imperfections in their true colours! Ah! it is conscience retouching the past, making all the little failings of life gather around the bed of death! It is the immediate prospect of going, with all these failings, to meet a heart-searching God! It is a sight of those things that make death-bed purgatories, death-bed hell!

How are we to account for these gloomy death-bed scenes among professors of religion? I answer,—

First, A want of regeneration,—many of them have never been born again.

Secondly, Backsliding. "I was converted," says one, "I could tell the time and place of my conversion." Ah! but you are a backslider now! *Satan was once an angel of light*, and raised the high hallelujahs of heaven, but he is now a devil! What comfort will it give you in a dying hour to remember you were once a Christian, but that you crucified your Lord afresh and put him to an open shame? This is another reason for these gloomy death-beds.

Thirdly, Remaining depravity. I don't wish to throw one doubt on your minds in reference to your friends who have gone to their graves. One says, "I have a husband gone," and another, "I a wife," and "I a sister," "a brother," "a dear friend,"—"they sought and found pardon, but we do not know that they ever professed to find Christian perfection; and, are they lost?" I answer, No! no! I would not lead you for a moment to doubt their final safety; but, ah! you do not know what they suffered in the first week of their affliction! You thought it was bodily pain that gave them that piercing, shuddering look, and wore them to a skeleton; but it was not that, it was sin stinging them. They did not tell you what it was that gave them such deep anguish, and no mortal can tell what they endured in that week's affliction. If you wish a calm hour in the last struggle, your consciences must be as clear as a diamond; it will then be like a mirror, it will reflect all the past. When passing by a house the other day, I saw a mirror placed outside of the window; another was also placed inside. What, thought I, can they want with these mirrors. The fact was, the person sitting at the window, by looking at the one *inside*, could see all that was passing on the *outside*. Ah! conscience will be a mirror, it will reflect the past, it will retouch life, and bring it again into distinct view. In the dying hour conscience *will* look back; it will force every Christian to review life. And what a scene does it present! Where is the man that can lay his hand upon his heart, and say, I have kept inbred sin under during the whole of my Christian life? Can you say I have never been envious at the prosperity of another? Never indulged in pride on the ground of your wealth, standing, talents? Never felt the love of the world, impure thoughts, unholy desires? Can you say I have been free from the slightest touch of sin since I believed? I don't think *one* of you can say so! The remains of sin in the heart are like powder; and only let a spark fall into it, and there will be an explosion. There has been powder enough in our hearts, and this world is full of sparks.

One is saying, "I contracted an unsuitable marriage,—I was unequally yoked, and all has been wrong ever since." Another is saying, "I formed an improper connection in business." "I," says another, "fell—gave way to bad tempers, angry passions, and Oh, there is a thousand

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witnesses in my own breast. Conscience bears witness loud, distinct, and clear, but God has brought the wanderer back—back to the throne of grace, and your language is,—

Though I have most unfaithful been,
Of all who e'er thy grace received,
Ten thousand times thy goodness seen,
Ten thousand times thy goodness grieved;
Yet, O! the chief of sinners spare
In honor of Thy great High Priest!
Nor in thy righteous anger swear
To exclude me from thy people's rest.

You feel how true these words are, how unfaithful you have been. If you harbour and indulge these enemies of God in your heart, what kind of a death will you have? Ah! we know, we have seen your brethren die, we know the whole race of you, we tell you there is before you a stormy Jordan! What then is to be done? The past cannot be altered. "What," say you, "are you aiming at?" I answer, I want you to be aroused, to be restored, to get this standing doubt removed, to be washed again in the blood of the Lamb, to get this sting of death taken away, to go on to perfection. Only get this sting removed, and your nature purified, and then you will have a happy death-bed! Bless God! you may start for glory, and never strike a rock! See! see! that vessel leaving the port of Liverpool. She passes the Pier-head; she jostles her way through the crowd of shipping that obstructs her passage; she clears every dangerous point; she escapes the sand-banks that lie concealed under the waters; she gets fairly out on the ocean; by and by she gets an overhaul, and all's right. Every inch of canvas is now crowded on, and on she bounds before the breeze. At length the shout, "Land ahead," is heard; she heaves in sight of port; she reaches it. As the captain steps ashore, his friends hail him with sparkling eyes,—“Well, captain, what sort of a voyage?” “O, capital; 'tis true we have had a few tremendous gales, but we have never split a sail, snapped a rope, or lost a spar; and here we are, safe in harbour!” “Well, captain, we congratulate you on your voyage.”

Glory be to God! you may yet get safe out of harbour; clear every rock, and pass, full sail, into the port of glory, amidst the congratulations of the heavenly host. My grace is sufficient for you; but this sting of death has remained, and, consequently, your experience has been a checkered scene, sometimes up, sometimes down. Now, I want to take you out of this uncertain state—I want you to get this standing doubt removed. If you want a triumphant and happy dying hour, then you must go on to perfection. I will not stop to explain the nature of Christian Perfection, only to ask a question or two. Are you a Protestant? Well, then stick to your Bible. I tell you, there are too many creeds floating about already; I'll stick fast to my Bible! God's Book is truth! Well, John says, speaking of God, “In him is no sin at all.” Do you believe that? “Yes,” says one, “it will be blasphemy to believe the op-

posite of that." "Well," he says again, in John iii. 9, "Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin, for his seed remaineth in him, and he cannot sin because he is born of God." Do you believe that? "Perfect love casteth out all fear," but, ah! you have not enjoyed that! Your experience has been a checkered scene. I appeal to your secret experience. Has it not been of such a character? Good old Bunyan describes purity of heart under the figure of the "Land of Beulah." He was a Calvinist, and thought it was only in death the soul could be cleansed from sin; but Beulah, however, was on this side of the river. When describing Christian and Hopeful as entering the land of Beulah, he says, "In this land the sun shone night and day; they were got quite over the enchanted ground, and Doubting Castle was clean out of sight; the very air was sweet and pleasant, and they heard continually the singing of birds. Here they were, in full sight of the city to which they were going, and the view became more and more distinct and clear; it was built of pearls and precious stones, and the streets thereof were pure gold; as they drew nearer and nearer, there were orchards, and vineyards, and gardens, and their gates opened into the highway; and now the sun shining full upon the city, it became so extremely glorious, that they could not yet with open face behold it, for the city was pure gold; as they travelled on, they met two men in raiment that shone like gold. These men asked the pilgrims whence they came, and what difficulties, dangers, comforts, and pleasures they had met with on the way; the men then said to Christian and Hopeful, "you have but two difficulties more, and you are in the city." Now I further saw, that between them and the city there was a river, and there was no bridge to go over, and the river was very deep; at the sight of the river the pilgrims were much stunned, but the men said, "You must go through, or you cannot get at the gate;" they then enquired if there was no other way to the gate. "Yes," said the men, "there is a bridge, but only two, since the days of Adam, have been allowed to pass over it, nor shall any more till the last trumpet sounds." Christian began to despond, and looked this way, and that way, but no way appeared but through the water. Christian plunged in, and went over head, and began to cry to Hopeful, and say, "I sink in deep waters. Thy billows go over my head, all thy waves go over me." Then, said Hopeful, "be of good cheer my brother, I feel the bottom, and it is good!" "then" said Christian, "Ah! my friend, the sorrows of death compass me about, and I shall not see the good land;" and with that a great horror and darkness fell upon him, so that he could not see before him; Hopeful had much trouble to keep his brother's head above the waters, yea, sometimes he would be quite gone down, and then, ere awhile, he would rise up again half dead; Hopeful said, "Brother, I see the gate, and men standing by to receive us;" but Christian would answer, "It is you, it is you they wait for. Ah! Brother! for my sins hath he brought me into a snare, and hath left me." Hopeful said, be of good cheer, Jesus Christ maketh thee whole;" and with that Christian broke out with a loud voice, "O! I see him again, and he tells me what

Whosoever is in him, and he at? "Perfect that! Your secret experience describes him." He was a d be cleansed river. When eulah, he says, quite over the ight; the very he singing of y were going. was built of pure gold; as ine yards, and the sun shin- at they could gold; as they gold. These ties, dangers, he men also ps more, and and the sky the river was stunned, but at the gate," "yes," said Adam, have last trumpet and that way, ned in, and sink in deep over me," the bottom, sorrows of," and with could not see head above and then, ere other, I see tion would for my sin said be at Christian is the when

tion passeth through the waters, I will be with thee," they took courage and waded through, and as they landed on the other shore, the two shining ones awaited them, and conducted them off to the New Jerusalem." If you would have a happy death, go on to perfection! a Holy Christian will have a happy death; this is the rule, I know there are exceptions to every rule, and there are exceptions to this. You will remember the closing scenes of John Smith, and Walsh; their dying hours were of a most distressing character, but I believe it was not for any sin that remained in them, for they had been sanctified for years; they had done the devil a great deal of harm! and no wonder that he should make a deadly onset upon them in the last solemn conflict! these instances, however, are the exceptions, the other is a rule; a holy life is followed by a happy death.

If, in your course of Christian duty, you "roll round with the year, and never stand still till the master appear," *at the eventide it will be light.* If you want to lay quarantine outside the port of glory, like the fever ships, then live without holiness! I know God keeps some holy souls lying quarantine outside the port, not however, because there is any sin in them; but to show them to earth, heaven, and hell. God shows them to the universe as a proof of the power of the blood of the cross; see! see! those two vessels just heaving in sight of the port! Land ahead! shouts the man at the look out; they draw nearer, and nearer shore; see! see! those two little boats rushing over the rippling waves; they are the health boats; now they haul alongside, there, they are drawn upon the deck of the vessel. "Well, Captain, from what port?" "From the port of justification! we got, however, our papers signed at the port of holiness," responds the Captain. "Any sick on board?" "No sir, no sir, all well and sound." Oh you who have been to sea, after a long voyage, you know what it is to lay quarantine forty days. "Well, Captain," says the Health Officers, "they are all in excellent trim, clean as a pin; go in, go in, do as you please, the whole country is before you." The other vessel looms in sight, the Officers go on board. "What port from, Captain?" "The port of justification." "Any sick aboard?" "Why a few of the passengers are not very well." The Officers pass through the vessel, to see the state of things, here they find one stowed away in his hammock, with the fever burning through his veins, as though it would devour him; another yonder, sitting up in his berth, pale, wan, and emaciated, in fact, sickness pervaded the whole ship. "Well," says the Captain to the Officers, "we have had a long voyage, bad weather, we should be glad to go in." "Nay, nay," say the Officers, "We cannot allow that, we cannot go beyond our commission." The Captain says, "Well, you do not mean to turn us back, I hope." "Turn you back, no, no, we'll neither turn you back, nor sink you, we never reject a vessel from your port, and moreover, you shall have the best provision the land will afford; but here you must lay quarantine forty days, there's the beautiful country open to your view, and when your sickness is gone, you shall enter it. Down with your sails, and

cast anchor." There she rides on the tossing waves, while the crew often go and view from the deck the good land. Ah! God has to keep many poor sin-sick souls outside the ports of glory; lying quarantine forty days, like the fever ships; there they are, tossing on the billows of the Jordan, and as they view the land through the mist and rage of the foaming waters, how plaintively they can sing:

On Jordan's stormy banks I stand,
And cast a wistful eye,
To Canaan's fair and happy land,
Where my possessions lie.

O the transporting rapt'rous scene,
That rises to my sight,
Sweet fields array'd in living green,
And rivers of delight.

No chilling winds, no poisonous breath,
Can reach that healthy shore;
Sickness and sorrow, pain and death,
Are felt and feared no more.

When shall I reach that happy place,
And be for ever blest;
When I shall see my Father's face,
And in his bosom rest.

They will enter at last. And oh! how interesting it is to see a ship; after a long voyage, sail into port. See, see that crowd on the Pier! a vessel is expected, "a sail! a sail!" shouts one, every eye is now peering through the dim haze. There she is, like a speck, far off on the ocean; she comes nearer and nearer; she grows more and more distinct; many hearts are now beating high with intense anxiety. See, that aged woman in the crowd, she presses now nearer to the pier edge, her eye wanders not, how fixed that look, how intense that gaze, her whole soul is in her countenance; the little speck grows larger and larger to her view. "Yes," she says, 'tis the vessel." There, the sailors are now pacing the deck, I see him—'tis he!—'tis he!—'tis my son!—I had given him up for lost, but *here he comes!*—he comes *once more!*—Blessed be thou Oh God of Israel, who doeth all things well!"—Now as the sight of home opens upon the view of the sailors, their hearts swell with joy. "Home!—home!—sweet home!" shout the crew. "Welcome! welcome! tempest tost mariners, again to our shores," respond the crowd. On a spring tide, before a fine breeze, amidst smiles, tears, and loud acclamations of joy, they pass full sail into the harbour! Faintly indeed, does this shadow forth the scene witnessed when a soul is entering Heaven; when it passes *full sail into the port of Glory.*

Christian behold the land is nearing!
Where the wild sea storm's rage is o'er,
Hark! how the heavenly hosts are cheering,
See in what throngs they range the shore.

Cheer up, cheer up the day breaks o'er thee,
Bright as the summer's noon-tide ray,
The stars gemm'd crowns, and realms of glory,
Invite my happy soul away.

Away! away! leave all for glory,
Thy name is graven on the throne,
Thy home is in those realms of glory,
Where thy Redeemer now is gone.

Go on to perfection; and may you all at last be enabled to shout victory, victory, in the blood of the Lamb.

THE OMNIPOTENCE OF FAITH.

Therefore I say unto you, what things soever ye desire when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them.—Mark ii. 24.

THE congregation will recollect that these words were spoken by the Saviour, as he was passing from the Mount of Olives to Jerusalem. By the way side he saw a fig-tree which looked beautiful, and doubtless gave signs of fruit upon it; and being hungry he looked up among the leaves for fruit, but there was none; and he said, no man eat fruit of thee henceforth for ever, *He killed the tree, but taught a great doctrine.* The next morning, as Christ and his disciples were passing by, Peter remembered that the tree had been cursed, he looked at it, and said, Master it is withered, withered from top to bottom, dried up from the roots, cursed. Jesus said unto them have faith in God; for verily I say unto you, that whosoever shall say unto this mountain be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea, and shall not doubt in his heart, but shall believe that those things which he saith shall come to pass; he shall have whatsoever he saith. Therefore, I say unto you, what things soever ye desire when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, ye shall have them. I should like to say to this audience, that whenever our Saviour said, "Verily, verily," He was about to deliver some very important truth. He was now teaching the Omnipotence of Faith. In Manchester, within the last few days, many things have been said about this sudden conversion. An old lady said to me, "why Mr. C. I hear that you are converting them by scores, and by hundreds. I don't understand this sudden conversion." I answer, there is no such a thing in the Scripture as gradual conversion, or gradual purity; there must be a last moment when sin exists, and a first moment when it does not, and this must take place in time, for one

moment after death would be too late, unless we believe in purgatory. Pardon and purity are doctrines clearly taught in the Bible; and in the very nature of things they must be sudden in their attainment. Our text is the great polar star of our salvation. You will remember it is recorded in the life of Napoleon, when he was contemplating the Russian campaign, his uncle, Cardinal Fesch, endeavoured to dissuade him from it. Napoleon's words are these: "Am I to blame because the great degree of power I have already attained, forces me to assume the dictatorship of the world? My destiny is not yet accomplished—my present situation is but a sketch of the picture which I must finish. There must be one universal European code—one court of appeal. The same money, the same weights and measures, the same laws must have currency through Europe. I must make one nation out of all the European states, and Paris must be the Capital of the World." His Uncle remonstrated with him, and conjured him not to tempt Providence, not to defy heaven and earth—the wrath of man, and the fury of the elements,—at the same time, he also expressed his fear that he would sink under the difficulties. The only answer which Napoleon gave, was in keeping with his character. He led the Cardinal to the window, and opening the casement, he pointed upward, and asked him "If he saw yonder star?" "No sire," answered the astonished Cardinal. "But I see it answered Napoleon." We point you to our text as the great polar star of faith, the great charter for believing—containing a principle in which slumbers omnipotence—as the medium that links man to the throne of the Great Eternal—connecting man with God.

Archimedes, when he discovered the power of the lever, said, "If you can find me a fulcrum to rest my lever upon, I can move the world." "What is a fulcrum?" says one, I answer a prop or centre on which a lever turns. "And what is a lever?" I answer, a bar or mechanical power by which great weights are moved.

Our text is the fulcrum—faith is the lever—and with it we can move two worlds at once, and Hell into the bargain. What things soever ye desire when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them.

Before we discuss this subject we want to ask a few questions. There are perhaps persons here belonging to other *Denominations*. You may be Calvinists, and as good I hope as any of us. You, may, however, differ from me on doctrinal points, and to do you good I should have to argue with you half an hour, and then perhaps leave you as I found you. Well, I leave all controversy with the pastors, but I want to beg just two things of you—first go with me as far as you can; and the second is, get all the good you can—God bless you, perhaps I may never see you again.

There are also some *backsliders* here. Are you willing to come back? Yes, says one, I am, I am, for I have had a miserable life of it.

And you who are seeking pardon, I want to ask you a question, Pardon, says one! why my heart is as hard as a flint. Well, if God

shall convert your soul before I leave this place, will you meet me in the school room at the close of this service to let me know it? Will you do it? Well, I believe you will.

And you who are seeking the witness of the Spirit and purity of heart. If God shall purify your heart before I leave this place, will you meet me at the close of this service and let me know it? You will all do it, will you? Well, I will trust to your honor. Says one, then you are expecting souls to be saved before you leave the pulpit are you? I am, I am expecting it, and Heaven expects it, and Hell expects it. I believe we shall have souls saved ere I leave this place. Lord help! Holy Ghost help! What things soever ye desire when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them.

I. IS THERE ANY DIFFERENCE BETWEEN FAITH AND BELIEVING?

I answer yes; just as much as between water at rest and water in motion—wind at rest and wind in motion. Believing is the application of faith to some truth. Believing is faith in motion. There may be ever so much faith, and no believing. It is not enough that there be a general conviction that God is true; that the Bible is a revelation from him; that the invisible things of which the Bible speaks, are realities; there may be all this, and yet no salvation. God has given us his testimony that Jesus Christ died a sacrifice for the sins of every man, and, consequently, for me. Faith, then, is putting confidence in God's testimony; it is to be understood in a plain, common-sense way. The Bible was written for the people—the common people—the mass; and if God had not meant the word faith to be understood in a common-sense way, he would have prefaced the Bible with a dictionary, and have explained the nature of believing; but, as there is no such an explanation given, we infer that we are to understand it just as it is understood in ordinary language among men. As to the mystery of faith, there is no mystery about it. Just put confidence in God as you would in a friend. Unbelief is the great sin of the age—the sin that shuts up heaven—the plague-spot of eternal death on the soul—the *sinner's mittimus* to hell written in his heart—the sin that *damns* the soul. On the other hand, faith opens the hand of God, secures salvation, conquers hell, and places the soul on the throne of God. Believing, then, is faith in motion—faith laying hold on the testimony of God.

II. IS FAITH THE GIFT OF GOD? There is a great deal of controversy in the world on this question—in America, in England, and especially in Scotland. Is faith the gift of God or is it not? I answer, every thing that is good in man is from God, and every thing that is bad in him is from the Devil, and himself. I am exceedingly jealous of every thing that seems to rob God of a particle of the glory of a sinner's salvation. But, in what sense is faith the gift of God? I answer, believing is the gift of the God of grace; just in the same sense as breathing, walking, eating, hearing, seeing, are the gifts of the God of nature. It is plain to every man's common sense, that while the power to perform these acts

is from God, the acts themselves are purely his own. As God does not breathe, walk, eat, hear, see for us, neither does he believe for us. God has given man a capacity to believe, viz., the Lord Jesus Christ, which is like a great sun risen upon our world.

We infer, then, as God has given the capacity, the evidence, the object, and as he has laid the responsibility on man. As the sentence of the last judgment turns on this point; as salvation or damnation is suspended on believing or non-believing, the act of faith must be possible—must be a man's own. Oh, how important it is that you understand what is God's part, and what is your part in this matter!—that you should see the folly of indulging in unbelief, under the delusion that God has not given you faith. How many on this vital point have been deceived! How many of the slain has the grave closed over! How many, as they rushed into eternity, and as the gleams of immortal light flashed upon them, and dispelled the delusions that ruined them, uttered a *death-howl*, went down *damned*, and more than blood was shed. What could God have done to enable you to believe that he has not done? If all things be ready, *then* why tarry? Why wait? Believe and be saved. "What things soever ye desire when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them."

III. HOW CAN YOU ACCOUNT FOR IT THAT THERE IS IN SOME A GREATER APTNESS TO BELIEVE THAN IN OTHERS?

Some account for it on the ground of constitutional differences. I don't believe a word of it; I don't believe that one man is born with a greater constitutional tendency to believe than another; others account for it on the ground of Divine partiality. I answer there is no partiality in God, except such as you make yourselves. God is partial to them that believe his word; hence it is written, "He that believeth shall be saved."

We may, in some measure, account for this inaptness to believe on the ground of the pride of intellect. "Oh!" says one, "I am not like one of the simple herd of mankind, who can receive for truth every silly notion announced to them. I must have evidence—good sound argument; I must be convinced before I can believe." "Well," you say, "do you despise me for that?" No; I honor a thinking man, but you pride yourself above the common mass, and you will not come down to receive God's plain, simple testimony. God says, "What things soever ye desire when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them," and you refuse to believe this testimony. "Well, says another, "some have a weak faith, and some a strong faith, How do you account for that?" I answer, the one has an exercised faith, and the other a non-exercised faith, and that is the reason why there is a greater aptness to believe in one than in another. Look yonder at that blacksmith, wielding the heavy hammer from hour to hour, and that without any injury or inconvenience. Were you to labour with that hammer

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for one half an hour, you would be so stiff the next morning that you would scarcely be able to lift your hand to your head; but the blacksmith is up and at it the next morning as lively as ever; exercise has made the difference. Take another illustration. Suppose a mother to bandage her son till it is thirteen years old, beginning at his feet, bandaging him up clean to his chin, like an Egyptian mummy. At the age of thirteen she removes the bandage, and says, "Now, my son, run forth and play with other children." Why, it cannot move, its joints are stiff, it is a complete cripple. Ah, some of you have been in bandages all your life; you are spiritual cripples. Glory be to God, if you will but believe, he will set your joints all right, and put strength in your limbs. "What things soever ye desire when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them." What does another mother do with her weakly child? Why, she sets him on his feet, and holds out one finger to him, and says, "Now, my dear, try;" down he tumbles. She sets him up again, "Come, come, my son; try, try again,—(Ah, you see he is very weakly yet!)" She tries again, and down he goes. "Come, come, my son, try once more. There, now, that's better." Soon he reaches from chair to chair; and, if you don't take care of him, he is out of doors among the wheels. That mother knows the philosophy of getting strength. He gets strength. "What things soever ye desire when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them."

IV. ARE THE OBJECTS OF FAITH LIMITED? Can I believe for what I like, and have it? I answer, No. On temporal matters you must put in an *if*. I was coming the other day from Ireland in a steamer; I generally suffer dreadfully from sea sickness. I, therefore, asked the Lord to let us have a calm sea, but I did not know but many ships lay outside the port loaded with corn, and would want a wind to blow them up to give food to the starving people, and I would not have the people perish to save me from sickness, therefore I had to put in an *if*. Still, I believe, we may get the full assurance of faith even for temporal matters. That mother may, for the safety of her son; that wife, for the deliverance of her husband. There's an instance in the life of Luther, of the assurance of faith in prayer. Miconius was ill with a swelling in his throat, given up by the medical men, and appeared to be on the borders of death. Luther prayed for him, and said, "Lord, Miconius is necessary to thy church; thy work cannot go on without him." He felt he had hold of God; he said, "Miconius shall not die, but live." Intimation of the confidence of Luther for Miconius, was sent to him, and he was so excited that the swelling burst, and his life was spared. In a German work there is a circumstance recorded of a mother who was lying on what seemed to be, the bed of death. Her little daughter, about five years of age, was heard to pray, "Oh dear Lord Jesus, make my mother better!" The little child was heard to repeat to herself, "Yes; I will make your mother better." Some would call this the child's superstition, but I call it her faith. The mother recovered. There was another

man who had a cancer in his eyes, and his eyes were eating out with the disease. This poor man cried to the Lord, and said, "O Lord, wilt thou let the cancer eat out mine eyes? Thou wilt not, Lord; thou wilt put greater honour on thy servant than that;" and, to the astonishment of medical men, his eyes were spared. And if we walk closely with God, we shall often get the full assurance of faith even for temporal blessings. But in reference to justification and holiness, we may pray with unlimited faith. "Be it unto thee according to thy faith," is the law of the kingdom: the kingdom of his grace his thrown open to you, and a voice from the throne says, "Be it unto thee even as thou wilt." The veracity of God, the blood of Christ, yea, every attribute of the Deity, every person in the Godhead, is pledged to the fulfilment of this promise. If you abandon sin, give up yourselves to him, trust in the blood of his Son, he will save you; nay he doth save you. There must be no ifs here; no peradventures. Let there be an uncompromising, unreserved trust in the blood of Christ; and if the Bible be a revelation from heaven, if there be a covenant of mercy, if there be virtue in the blood of Christ, power in the Holy Ghost, truth in God, you will be saved. "What things soever ye desire when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them."

V. HOW CAN WE RECONCILE THE PHRASEOLOGY OF THE TEXT, AND BELIEVE THAT WE HAVE IN THE PRESENT, WHAT IS SPOKEN OF IN THE FUTURE TENSE?

I was greatly perplexed on this point till, one day, I happened to be in company with two ministers, one was a Methodist and the other a Baptist brother. The Methodist said to the Baptist brother, "I have been thinking much about the text, 'What things soever ye desire when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them.' I think there must be some mistake about the translation; have you a Greek Testament?" A good old Greek Testament was reached down; the Greek Lexicon and Grammar were also produced, to examine the root and the tense of the verb. The words, *Pisteute* believe, and *labante* receive, were carefully examined. The Baptist brother fixed his finger on the words and said, "It must be in the first future." "No," said the Methodist; "see *pisteupsete* the first future, has a different termination." "Then," said he, "it must be in the first Aorist." "No, brother, see *episteupsete* the first Aorist has a prefix to it, therefore it cannot be that." The Baptist brother said, "I see I must give it up, the words are rightly translated." He remembered it was written, Isa. lxx. 24, "And it shall come to pass that before they call I will answer, and while they are yet speaking I will hear." And had not Charles Wesley an eye to this passage when he penned that hymn,—

I take the blessing from above,
And wonder at thy boundless love.

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The Greek scholar can examine for himself, and though he may have all the knowledge of an archangel, I defy him to say the passage is wrongly translated. It is, then, "What soever ye desire, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them." Then you are not to believe that it was done some time ago; not that he will do it at some future period; but believe that He doth it now.

VI. WHAT PREPARATION MUST A MAN HAVE IN ORDER TO BELIEVE? "What do you mean," says one, "by a preparation?" I answer, I mean how many tears a man must shed; how deep must be his conviction; how soft must be his heart; what amount of godly sorrow must he feel; how long must he remain in a state of repentance. I have read this blessed Bible through on my knees, every word of it, and I find no standard in it; God has set up none. There is not a word said about how many tears a man must shed; how soft or hard the heart must be; nothing of the kind: and, as God has set up no standard, I'll be the last man in the world to make one. I believe there are far too many creeds and standards floating about the Christian church already. No; there is no spiritual barometer or thermometer, and I am glad of it, for it would greatly perplex a minister, and it would also greatly distress penitent souls. Some persons could not shed a tear if you would give them the world; still the heart may bleed while the eyes are dry. Glory be to God, he has put the power in *believing*—purifying their hearts by *faith*. It is no where said, purifying them by tears, by feelings, by soft hearts or hard ones, by deep convictions or shallow ones; He has however, said, "What things soever ye desire when ye pray, *believe* that ye receive them, and ye shall have them." Oh! it is by faith, by confidence in God, and this method will meet all cases—the case of the farmer, of the doctor, the lawyer, of the president of the college, of the servant, of the master, of the subject of the sovereign, of the little child, of the venerable sage, of the man of a, b, c, of the philosopher—yes, of all grades of mind from the first dawn of reason up to intellectual noon. "You do not mean to say," says one, "that no preparation is necessary?" I answer, no, I do not; for where sin is indulged, God will never save. Sin must be given up. Many of the Methodists are holding on to sin—indulging in things that grieve the Holy Spirit. They are holding the truth in unrighteousness, but, than thank God, other denominations are awakening up to these great doctrines,—some of the Calvinists are. Some of the Calvinist ministers came to one of our meetings the other day, and said, "Sir, we are come to get our hearts cleansed from sin." The Calvinists may not have all the clearness on these great doctrines the Methodists have, but God will purify their hearts by faith.

The Methodists have clear scriptural views of these great doctrines, but I tell you, you are holding on to things that will damn you; God would as soon sanctify the Devil as sanctify you. I know what I say. I speak advisedly; "Lift up holy hands without wrath, and doubting." Lift them

up to show that there is no iniquity in them. You may leave the chapel as soon as you like, or if you have patience to tarry you may; but I tell you it is of no use, God will never purify your hearts till you give up the sins to which you are clinging. See that poor fellow wandering on through the wilderness,—the night is dark, he stumbles, and falls into some deep dark pit; he sets up a cry for help, his cry breaks on the stillness of night, and is heard echoing on through the wilderness. See those three men passing on, now, as the moon just glimmers through the cloud; see! see! they are standing listening, they have heard that cry for help,—now they are making way to that spot whence the sound proceeds; one of them is standing on the edge of that deep pit,—he listens, and the cry is heard again. “Who is down there?” “Oh! sir, I have fallen into this dreadful place, my feet are stuck in the mire.” “Be of good courage, my friend, there are two strong fellows here besides myself, we’ll soon have you up;” now the rope is being let down. “There, take hold of that rope, man, take fast hold, now give a strong pull;” now up comes the rope, the man in the pit has let it slip. “Why, what’s the matter down there? Come, come, now take a firmer hold. Now comrades, give another pull.” Up comes the rope again. “Why man, you must surely have something in your hands.” “I have a few things, sir, that I should like to bring up with me, down here.” “Come, cast them away, and take hold of the rope, and not trifle in this way.” Now he casts the things out of one of his hands, and they try again, but up comes the rope again. “I tell you man, if you don’t cast away those things and take hold, we will leave you to your fate.” Now he casts them all away, and takes firm hold, and *up he comes*. Renounce sin. If you indulge iniquity in your heart you may cry till doomsday, and God will not hear your prayer. What preparation is necessary? I ask, do you want pardon or purity? “What things soever ye desire when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them.” Here, then, you see the preparation necessary. 1st, Desire; 2nd, Prayer; 3rd, Faith.

Desire: If your desires be sincere, you will put away every evil, you will sacrifice every idol, though they may be dear as a right hand, or precious as a right eye; Desires, says an old writer, are the *sails of the mind*. What is it that hurries the poor drunkard to the drunkard’s grave with a velocity swift as time? Why, desire; deep, intense, burning desire; desires hardly surpassed by the damned, as they thirst for the cooling stream. What is it that hurries on the thief to plunder his neighbor, to stamp his own character with infamy, and endanger his life? why desire for wealth not his own. What is it that works up man to a point, when he can commit a crime, the recollection of which chills his blood, a crime that brands him with the foul deed of murder? Why, desire.

If you desire salvation, “then,” says Wesley, “look for it every day—every hour—every moment.” Why not this hour, this moment? Certainly, you may look for it now if you believe it is to be obtained by faith. And by this token you may surely know whether you seek it by faith or

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by works. If by works, you want something to be done first. You think you must do thus or thus. Then you are seeking it by works unto this day. If you seek it by faith, and if as you are, then expect it now. It is of importance to observe that there is an inseparable connexion between these three points: expect it by *faith*, expect it as you are, and expect now. To deny one of them, is to deny all of them;—to allow one of them is to allow them all. Do you believe we are sanctified by faith? Be true to your principle, and look for the blessing just as you are, neither better nor worse, as a poor sinner that has still nothing to plead, but *Christ died*. John Fletcher says, "Come to a naked promise by a naked faith." I mean by naked faith, faith stripped of feeling with a soft heart, or a hard heart; just such a heart as you have now. If you are seeking to weep more, to get a softer heart before you come to Christ, then you, until now, are seeking salvation by works. You see the condition God requires, *Desire, Prayer, Faith*. Desires are the sails of the mind. Have you your sails up? Yes, some of you have. Oh! my dear brother, you are on the very edge of the fountain. Said the poor woman, "If I can but touch the hem of his garment, I shall be made whole." The crowd presses around him; I am weak with the loss of blood; I fear I shall never reach him; I shall die in the attempt. Well, if I tarry here I die—I can but die. I will make the attempt. Borne this way and that way, by the waves of the people, now she is being borne nearer and nearer. If I can but touch the hem of his garment. Now, trembling, pale, agitated, she stretches out her hand and touches, and is made whole. Now, sinner, Christ is in the crowd, he is nigh thee, he is passing by thee; touch him, touch him, and live.

In America, some years ago, there was an old gentleman who had constructed an electrifying machine. The students from one of the colleges went to his house to see this wonderful machine. He began to wind round, and round, and round, till the machine was charged with the electric fluid. Now my lads, said he, take hold of each other's hands; now you that stand before there, touch that brass ball; he touched, and sudden as lightning, the shock was felt through the whole group. And if ever this promise was charged with *electrifying, galvanizing, saving power*, it is now. "What things soever ye desire when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them." See! see! that vessel leaving the port of Liverpool. (Now don't laugh at my seafaring language.) Ship aho-oy! whither bound? New York, sir, New York? When do you expect to get there, Captain? Good vessel, sir; fair wind; I expect a short voyage. Why, man, you have not a rag of sail up; I tell you where you'll get it if you don't take care; you'll get to the bottom. Now, here comes another vessel. Ship aho-oy! whither bound? New York, sir, New York? When do you expect to arrive there Captain? Look aloft, sir; the compass stands direct to a point; fair winds and a fair breeze. How finely she's rigged—mainsail, topsail, top-gallant-sail! See how she bounds on before the breeze! The desires are the sails of

A VOICE FROM AMERICA.

the mind. Have you got your sails up? Yes, yes, bless God; I see many of you have,—many of you in the gallery there, and many of you below there, have your sails up.—Come,

Blow, breezes blow, a gale of grace.

Now, let all get down on their knees,—all of you in the gallery there and all of you below. Let all get down before the Lord.

Now, "what things soever ye desire when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them." It is not a cold, lifeless trust, but a good, bold, hearty venture on Christ. I cannot doubt the truth of my Lord—I can as soon doubt his divinity as his truth. I can as soon doubt his God-head as his veracity. What preparation, says one, is necessary? "What things soever ye desire when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them." God cannot lie. I would *dis* rather than doubt my God. God is not a man that he should lie. The Devil does not care a rush for a Christian believing that God is able, willing, waiting, and anxious to sanctify the soul. Nor does he care for him believing that God will do it sometime. No; it is faith in the present tense that the Devil dreads,—believing that God does just now do it. This simply and fully taking God at his word is the great spell. Come, my dear brother, come, my dear sister, don't be afraid to step on the sea to Jesus as Peter did. Hark! he bids you meet him. Now step (so to speak) on the naked promise, and the Spirit and the blood will fully cleanse. If ever my God was here, he is here now. Touch the promise—touch the hem of his garment. I know some of you are touching; He is saving some of you. I know my God is saving some of you. Let your inmost soul cry out,—

"Tis done, thou dost this moment save;
With full salvation bless!
Redemption through thy blood I have,
And spotless love and peace.

"What things soever ye desire when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them."

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